

**Testimony from Clayton Keister, MCF-Rush City**

**Re: HF 2349 (HF 1078, Article 4)**

Submitted by Jay Claire, TC IWOC

April 3, 2021

Mr. Chair,

My name is Clayton Keister and I'm a juvenile lifer. I was incarcerated in 2005 at 17 years old and have been incarcerated now for 15 years. I am incredibly happy to see the MRRA legislation, however it falls short of the mark that it should aim for. Many of the people that this bill would affect the most are the people who are excluded.

When I first came into prison, we were told by our caseworker's that Lifer's weren't getting out, so just stay out of trouble if you can. There was no incentive or reason to stay out of trouble and in programming. And for the longest time, that remained the status quo, all the way up until Commissioner Roy started releasing lifer's. Once people started getting released, Lifer's started programming because it seemed like hope was out there again.

Hope is contagious; it's what makes it bearable to wake up in a cell. By making the MRRA an all-inclusive bill, it will not just make our prisons more effective, it will also make our neighborhoods better because those who have been released will have earned that precious gift.